

# The Library Assistant :

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

### FEBRUARY MEETING AT HACKNEY.

The fifth Meeting of the Session will be held at the **Central Public Library, Mare Street, Hackney, N.E.**, on Wednesday, **14th February**, at 8 p.m. Councillor **D. W. Marpole**, Chairman of the Libraries Committee, has kindly consented to preside.

The following paper will be read:—

**"PROCEDURE IN CHANGING FROM A CLOSED TO AN OPEN LIBRARY,"** By **Walter H. Parker**, *Sub-Librarian of the Hackney Public Libraries.*

Light refreshments will be provided in the Committee Room at 7 p.m.; afterwards those desirous of inspecting one of the busiest of the Metropolitan Libraries will have an opportunity of observing details connected with the working of the various departments. It will be remembered that not long ago the system of issue in the Lending Department at this Library was changed from a combined indicator and card-charging method to one of complete safe-guarded open access; Mr. Parker is therefore in a position to explain fully all the difficulties which were met and how they were overcome, and an instructive paper will result.

The Central Library is one minute's walk from Hackney Station on the North London Railway; Hackney Downs Station on the Great Eastern Railway is about 7 minutes' walk from the Library; Dalston Station on the North London Railway is about 10 minutes' walk (½d. 'bus to Library); and electric cars from Aldgate, Bloomsbury, Goswell Road, and Moorgate Street pass the door. Several motor-buses pass through Dalston from various parts of London; also there is a good service of motor-buses from "The Elephant," via London Bridge to Dalston (fare 2d.).

### L.A.A. EASTER EXCURSION AND SCHOOL TO PARIS. PROGRAMME.

A Holiday School has been arranged to take place during the Easter week-end, the object of which will be to make acquaintance with the working and methods of the Bibliothèque Nationale (the largest Library in the world), the great special Libraries of Paris, and various other things interesting to us as librarians.

The party will leave London on Thursday evening, April 4th, at 8.45 p.m. (Victoria Station) and will arrive in London again at 5.30 a.m. on the following Tuesday. The route will be *via* Newhaven and Dieppe, by far the most interesting route.

A good hotel has been chosen, and it is particularly desired that the whole party shall share the same hotel. *This will be practicable if members enter as soon as possible.*

The morning of Friday will be devoted to a visit to the Bibliothèque Nationale, by invitation of its principal librarian, and under the direction of the well-known authority on French Libraries, M. Eugene Morel.

Saturday morning there will be a visit to the great Library of the Arsenal, by invitation of the Chief Librarian, M. Henry Martin.

There will also be brief visits to the St. Geneviève Library, the Library of Law, etc., all of which have special and important modes of administration.

These visits will occupy from one to two hours each day, and the remainder of the day will be spent in some such order as follows:—

FRIDAY. Visit the Louvre, Arc de Triomphe, Bois de Boulogne, Boulevards, Place de la Bastille, etc.

SATURDAY. By boat on the Seine to the Eiffel Tower, The Invalides, Latin Quarter, Pantheon, Luxembourg, Musée Cluny, etc.

SUNDAY. The Cathedral of Notre Dame, The Madeleine, and in the afternoon, to the Palace of Versailles (when the wonderful fountains will be playing).

MONDAY. Leave Paris by train in the morning. Stop at Rouen, one of the most beautiful of Norman cities, see the great Cathedral, and other interesting and quaint sights of the town.

The evenings will be spent as follows:—It is hoped to arrange a re-union and dance, a visit to the Opera, and there are many other interesting things which will make the evenings in Paris full of pleasure and diversion.

Any ladies who desire further information may write to Miss Olive E. Clarke, Central Library, Islington, N.

#### SPECIAL MACALISTER PRIZES.

Mr. J. Y. W. MacAlister, F.S.A., an old friend of the Association, has generously come forward and placed at the disposal of the Council three prizes as follows:—

First Prize	..	Three Guineas.
Second „	..	Two Guineas.
Third „	..	One Guinea.

for the best professionally interesting account of the Holiday School. Three members, therefore, have a chance of recovering the whole or an appreciable part of their expenses.

#### ESTIMATE OF EXPENDITURE.

The details of this are not final, but may be taken as approximate:—Travelling ticket from London, with hotel (including accommodation, tips, bed, breakfast, luncheon, and dinner), £3 10s. If a number apply early this will be reduced no doubt.

*Names should be sent at once to the Honorary Secretaries (undersigned), and a deposit of 5s. should be sent to Mr. H. Rutherford Purnell (Honorary Treasurer of the Committee), at the Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon, by March 9th, the balance is to be paid on April 1st, and tickets will be issued within two days of that date.*

W. C. BERWICK SAYERS,	} Honorary Secretaries.
Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon,	
JAMES D. STEWART,	
Central Library, Holloway Road, Islington, N.	

## SOUTH WALES BRANCH.—PROGRAMME, 1911-1912.

- January 17th. At Cathays' Branch: "History of Libraries in Great Britain," by Miss Mills.  
 "The Public Library Movement in Cardiff," 1862-1912, by Mr. R. G. Williams, Deputy Librarian.
- February 21st. "A Short Account of a Famous Oxford Library," by Mr. L. C. Chubb.
- March 20th. "Sunday Opening of Public Libraries," by Mr. W. Cowdry.  
 "The Fiction Question," by Mr. F. C. Bullock.
- April 20th. ANNUAL MEETING.

All meetings unless otherwise stated will be held in the Central Library, Cardiff, at 3.15 p.m.

The Committee will be glad to receive offers to read papers, and also any suggestions for the improvement of the Branch.

## EDITORIAL.

**Paris.**—A most welcome addition to the attractions of the Paris holiday school at Easter is the offer, by Mr. J. Y. W. MacAlister, of three prizes for the best professionally interesting accounts of the outing, of which particulars will be found on another page. Mr. MacAlister, who has always taken a keen interest in the work of the Association, has volunteered his most willing help in the arrangements for the school. We have already said that the success of the trip is assured by reason of the number of names already received. We believe it will be an occasion that it will be worth the while of anyone making special efforts to attend. The arrangements are detailed on the announcements page, and in the leaflet enclosed with the present number.

**The Branches.**—We promised last month to give an outline of the work of the Branches, and have much pleasure in doing so, because the reports from them all are most encouraging, and fully come up to the expectations that were formed as to their progress. In the paragraph on "The Work of the Council," it will be seen that a committee has been formed to deal with the question of increasing the membership of the Association. It has been pointed out that the number of assistants belonging to the Association whether in London or in the provinces is small compared with the total number of assistants in the country. Throughout the country there are large districts almost unrepresented in the Association; and it will be found that there is room for every member to do his best to point out the advantages of membership of the L.A.A. to every assistant who has not yet joined. Our influence, through the increase of branches, and local enthusiasm in the districts where they have been

established, has increased to a very great degree. We look forward to a combination of library assistants in an Association which can be truly called a national association. The **Midland Branch** has shown a continuously progressive activity, and its meetings have been among the most successful in the country. A special feature of the Branch is the efforts made towards the arrangement of meetings in places accessible to members from different parts of the country. During the past year this object was to a certain extent defeated by the impossibility of obtaining railway facilities, but we are looking forward to a continuance of these meetings, which, with suitable railway arrangements, should prove successful in every way. The **North Eastern Branch**, under its new secretary, Mr. R. Wright, has also continued to progress and has begun the year with a meeting addressed by Mr. L. Stanley Jast, whose paper is printed in the current number. This paper, it will be seen, is one of great importance to the profession, and carries the suggestions made by Mr. Jast at the Annual Meeting of the Library Association much further and in more detail. The success of the meeting at which it was given shows how the Branch is taking a forward position in the work of furthering the library movement. Mr. A. J. Hawkes, who has done so much in promoting the success of the **Yorkshire Branch**, by his appointment to the Welsh National Library, has been obliged to resign his position as Secretary of the Branch. While taking this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Hawkes on his new appointment, and wishing him every success in it, we cannot help expressing our regret that he is obliged to sever his connexion with the Branch. But we feel every confidence in his successor, Mr. Norman Treliving. The year has started well with a meeting at Leeds, in which Mr. Jast repeated his address, on "The Library Outlook," and there is every promise of a successful session. The **South Wales Branch** has also undergone changes, Miss J. Taylor having been appointed secretary, and Mr. R. G. Williams chairman. The Branch has during the past year come through a critical stage of its existence, and we believe has been infused with fresh enthusiasm. It is extending its membership and area, and we hope that meetings will shortly be arranged between the various large towns that cluster in the South of Wales. We have purposely left mention of the **Irish Branch** until last because we wish to draw attention to the possibilities for successful work in the district. At present the Branch is confined almost entirely to Belfast. We should like to see the area extended

by the inclusion of Dublin and other towns on the east coast, since the intercommunication between districts is one of the best means of creating and stimulating enthusiasm. The Irish Branch has, like the Welsh, undergone a critical period, and as it is emerging it may well increase its strength by widening its field of operation. We believe the time is not far distant when we shall be able to see branches in other parts of Ireland, where at present the Association is unrepresented.

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### THE LIBRARY OUTLOOK: AN ADDRESS TO MUNICIPAL LIBRARY ASSISTANTS.\*

By L. STANLEY JAST, Chief Librarian of the Croydon Public Libraries; Honorary Secretary of the Library Association.

In a paper which I read at the last Annual Meeting of the Library Association at Perth, dealing with the immediate future, I ventured to refer to the present period as a critical one, both for municipal libraries and municipal librarians. For the interests of what we usually speak of as the library movement and the interests of the library profession are identical: whatever advances the movement as a whole must react to the advantage of the profession as a whole, and the opposite is equally true. In considering briefly, therefore, what I might call the library outlook one must necessarily consider the various questions involved both from the standpoint of the public, and the narrower standpoint of the official.

During a period which we may estimate roughly as the last quarter of a century, the municipal public library has passed through a period of great development. Those of us who have been engaged in library work during this time have seen the growth of a conception of the public library very much wider than that which obtained and dominated public libraries during their earlier years. It was possible not so many years ago for a prominent librarian to assert at an Annual Meeting of the Library Association that the public library was *not* an educational institution. He would be a bold man who would say so to-day. While the recreative side still remains a characteristic feature of the work of the public library, and must always remain, it is no longer

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\*Delivered to the North Eastern Branch of the Library Assistants' Association, at Sunderland, 17th January, 1912; and to the Yorkshire Branch of the same Association, at Leeds, 18th January, 1912.

regarded by most people as the most important side; the emphasis is laid to-day upon the workshop, the educational, the university side. The result of this change of emphasis is seen in many different directions. Twenty-five years ago it is doubtful if any municipal public library was systematically classified; certainly not the great municipal reference libraries, which needed systematic arrangement most. Twenty-five years ago what was considered to be the most efficient type of library catalogue was represented by such examples as Mr. Haggerston's catalogue of the Public Library of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which gave the type to a whole series of libraries, including the one in which I myself was trained, viz., Halifax. Compare such a catalogue with many of the author and classified catalogues of to-day, and you will see how enormously this kind of bibliographical work has been improved, and how much more intelligently the needs of the student as well as of the general reader have been met. Consider again the difference between then and now in the matter, the all-important matter, of book selection. Twenty-five years ago the buying of books on the principle of the largest number of volumes for the smallest payment was comparatively common; but no self-respecting library authority buys books by weight now. Twenty-five years ago work with children was represented by the old juvenile collections, the contents of which as remembered by the older ones amongst us, and as recorded in their catalogues, were of an extremely mixed order. Granted that we are perhaps too much inclined in these days to overload our juvenile collections with purely juvenile books, forgetting that the best type of reading child reads a good deal that is not specially written for him, at all events this was true of his father, and if it is not true of him so much the worse for him, still there is no doubt that our collections of works for children are very much better in every way than they were at the time to which I refer. And then, of course, we have seen the development of the school library, one of the most important and definite links between the public educational system of the country and the municipal library.

If we narrow our outlook and consider the state of affairs within the library profession itself, we find a parallel development no less remarkable and no less full of promise for the future. The educational training of assistants by the Library Association has been developed, and is gradually but surely eliminating the untrained man. And we have seen the recognition of our education work by at least one

University, the University of London. Quite recently also we have seen a definite step taken towards the organisation of the profession by that re-classification of the Members of the Library Association into Professional and Non-Professional Members, which we refer to, if not with technical, at all events with practical correctness, as professional registration. Nor must I forget, at all events before this audience, to mention the coming of the Library Assistant as an articulate element in the movement as one of the characteristic signs of the times. Here then are a few of the outstanding evidences of the new spirit which has infused libraries in recent years. Let me add that not the least of the factors responsible for this development is the tremendous activity in library housing, which has followed upon the unparalleled munificence and public spirit, and far sighted recognition of the great part which the Public Library can play in the national life, of Dr. Andrew Carnegie.

I was asked by one of the library assistants in the North, who was speaking to me about my visit, to strike an optimistic note. I gather from this that some of you are inclined to take a gloomy view of the future, at any rate as it concerns yourselves. Gentlemen, in the rapid picture which I have sketched there is obviously no foothold whatever for pessimism. But it would be foolish to deny that there are certain features both in the movement as a whole, and in the condition of the library profession, which are by no means reassuring. Let us see what these are, not that we may find therein grounds for gloomy anticipations, but rather that we may ask ourselves what is necessary to be done in order that such obstacles as may exist to future satisfactory development may be overcome.

The worst feature about the present condition of affairs, and the fundamental cause of much else that is unsatisfactory, is the fact that after more than half a century of successful working, the limitation of the library rate to one penny in the pound remains. In every other department of municipal activity the resources obtained from the rates have been increased in some sort of rough proportion to the increase in the demands made by the public upon the various municipal services. Not so in the department of the Public Library. There, demands of every sort have been increasing, demands for better and more buildings, demands for better and more books, demands for extension work of many kinds, demands for better catalogues, and demands also for better trained and educated library staffs.

But with all this there is an unconcealed reluctance on the part of the public so to finance libraries that these good things may be supplied, and that librarians may be remunerated on a scale bearing some reasonable relation to the general and technical knowledge which the power to serve the public as they wish to be served implies. This question of remuneration is one in which you all feel naturally a very particular personal concern, but it is not merely a personal question; obviously the nature of our human material vitally affects the nature of the work which the libraries do; the man behind the book, like the man behind the gun, counts for a good deal, and it may be further said that it is not and cannot be in the interests of public ethics that they shall seriously under-pay any body of public servants. I have referred to our system of library education, and to the fact that the University of London has recognised this work by organising a department of Library Instruction at the London School of Economics and Political Science. There is no need to labour the value of this recognition, as setting the official seal of approval of the highest educational authority upon our efforts to make ourselves more efficient public servants. Unfortunately we are witnessing now a state of arrested development in our educational affairs; and I regret to say that it is quite on the cards that unless more students attend the classes in London they will be closed. But where are those students to come from? I confess I hardly know. It is clear that both the quality and the number of possible library students depend upon the opportunities for remunerative work which exist within the profession, and those opportunities seem to have been growing less and less as year follows year. This state of arrested development, of marking time, seems to be characteristic at the present moment of the whole library movement. One cause no doubt of the fewness of the opportunities of advancement which open out either to the assistant or the chief librarian, is the fact that there are too many of us, and we are too tightly packed for easy movement. We are, if I may put it so, jammed by material which ought never to have been in a public library at all, or at all events, ought never to have been either recognised or named as library material; some of it might be usefully employed for messenger and certain kinds of routine work, but is no good for anything higher. Now it is not the slightest use any of us blinking this fact, it is writ large in almost every library in the country. We must exchange the immobility of the solid for something of the mobility of the liquid, and give ourselves



breathing room ; and there are only two ways of doing this, we must either expand or reduce the number of units within the body. Expansion, which in the past has been very rapid, too rapid for our finances, must in the future be a slow process ; that of reducing the units offers the only practicable possibility of relief. The time is undoubtedly coming, has indeed come I believe in one or two libraries, when no superior post will be filled except by assistants who qualify themselves by taking either the diploma or some of the certificates of the Library Association.

This brings me to a question which I am told exercises many of you a good deal, viz., the question of registration, and particularly the action of the Council of the Library Association in refusing to grant Fellowships in many instances to assistants. I am not here to give the particular reasons which have dictated the policy of the Council in this respect, and those of you who imagine that the Council is going to formulate such reasons show little knowledge of what is fit and proper and wise in matters of this kind. But there are one or two considerations which I would lay before you in passing. Firstly, I am informed that many of you are under the impression that registration is a sort of closed ring initiated and run by the Council in the selfish interests of librarians. Nothing could be a greater travesty of the facts. Let me remind you, what all of you ought to know without my telling you, that the demand for registration came almost entirely from you yourselves, and that so far from librarians as a body being anxious to have registration, it was only by persistent effort in urging the necessity of registration in the interests of the assistants more particularly, that after some two or three years' work in educating the members of the Library Association as to the desirability of action, such action was taken, and the consent of the Privy Council obtained to the scheme as it now stands. Secondly, let me draw attention to a natural but most unfortunate misapprehension which apparently obtains among the assistants at large as to the object of the clause permitting the Council to grant fellowships to certain assistant librarians. That clause was not in the original scheme at all, it was inserted as the result of representations made to us by the Library Assistants' Association, and on the understanding that the object of it was limited to the recognition of a few assistants in the country possessing special claims in this regard. The clause relating to librarians we were bound to make as wide and as inclusive as possible ; practically we had no choice as to that, we had

to open the door as widely as it would go. But with regard to assistants our position was entirely different, and in this case our clear and plain duty to the interests of the profession at large demanded that if we opened the door at all, it should be merely set ajar. The principle by which in the one case you have inclusion as the dominating idea, and in the other case exclusion, may perhaps seem to you to be unfair, but that is really not so. Granted that the widely opened door has meant the admission to fellowship of librarians of quite small libraries, inferior in attainments and in responsibilities to many assistants in large libraries; granted that this fact will for many years prevent the fellowship from possessing in itself and by itself any real significance; it is also true that if we take the librarians of the country as a body, their age average must be pretty high, and leaving out of count the fact that a large number of them will never become competitors in future appointments, the number of uncertificated and untrained men must in the nature of the case decrease rapidly as the years go by, so that within a couple of decades they will practically disappear. And yet some of you, complaining of the fellowship being granted to many whose claim to it rests neither upon education, nor training, nor responsibility, nor achievement, would further perpetuate this state of things, where there is not even the one thing the others do possess, viz., the definitely and publicly recognised official status. That there are individual cases of hardship, and perhaps even injustice, I am not prepared to deny, but such cases are inseparable from the preliminary stages of any registration system, and they would occur even if that registration were carried out by archangels. One more remark on this question and I have done, and turn to more important matters. I deprecate in the strongest possible fashion any attempt of your Association to coerce the Council in a matter in which they are created by law the sole judges. You have already as a body taken up particular cases, no doubt you have done so from the best of motives, but in the interests of the profession, in your own true interests, I earnestly advise you to drop this kind of action completely. It is indefensible in principle and dangerous in policy, and if you are unable to believe in the good judgment and in the sense of justice of the governing body of the Library Association, conceal that disbelief, for its public expression injures all of us, but you more than us.

I return then to the question of library finance, which is the principal lion in the path of our future progress. Whether

we discuss the remuneration of librarians, the training of librarians, or the wider question of the place of the library in the life of the country, in fact from whichever point we start out, we invariably land sooner or latter at the blank wall of the limited Library Rate. That is the dark cloud upon the library sky, and until we are able to remove it, we can talk about library development but we shall talk mostly in the air. The Library Bill, which the Library Association has in hand, and which among other things seeks to remove, or rather, as it has been recently amended, to raise the limitation, makes but slow progress, and I confess that I am not very sanguine myself as to any immediate prospect of its becoming law, unless—and here I touch the heart of what I have to say to you—we bestir ourselves and create a body of public support for the Bill which will suffice to drive it home. For, what I don't think many of you realise sufficiently, the reason for this slow or rather non-progress of the Bill is the lack of an adequate public opinion behind the Bill. And if we ask why there is this wide-spread indifference, accentuated in some cases to hostility, towards a Bill which after all is only permissive, we shall find it in the very crude ideas about what public libraries are, and what they ought to be, which exists in the mind, not only of the man in the street, but also of the man in the Council Chamber, who is sent there by the man in the street. It is quite true that we are passing through a period of general marking time in municipal affairs, there is little municipal constructive policy, and most of our public bodies are at present absorbing their energies in saving money, or pretending to save it; but the law of physics, and it is equally the law of human physics, is that action brings reaction, and it is certain that the present period of municipal depression will be followed by a period of great activity and of considerable expenditure. What is important for us is that when that time comes the public library shall be ready to take its place on the crest of the wave.

Now in order that we may be in that position it is necessary that we should educate the public as to the real requirements, the real needs, the real functions, of a Municipal Public Library. We must address ourselves primarily to the man in the street, for it is he who makes and unmakes Councils; we must get out of his head the idea, still astonishingly and exasperatingly prevalent, that the main functions of the public library are to display half-penny papers and to circulate fiction to shop-boys and servant-girls. We want him to see in the public library the

greatest educational factor, and at least one of the great moral factors in the national life. We want him to realise that the partial failure of the great system of public education which he has been prevailed upon to establish, and which, however grumblingly, he pays to maintain, is due in some part to the failure to recognise that the crown of this educational system should be the public library, and that an effective system would feed into the public library at every point. This is a large order no doubt, but I believe myself in the innate reasonableness of the man in the street, once your case is properly laid before him. The case of the public library has never been properly laid before him; if it had been we should not now have been in the position in which we are.

This then should be our new crusade, to arouse librarians to the absolute necessity of scoring the mission and ideal of the public library as deeply as may be in the mind of the average man.

Let me indicate very briefly, for I have already occupied too much of your time, how I suggest we should organise for this great effort. In the first place, the Library Association must be made as strong and representative and as compact a body as possible. To that end no library assistant in receipt of let us say a minimum salary of £80 per annum ought to consider it in consonance with his self-respect, and his duty to the profession to remain outside its ranks. The younger assistants will find their natural place, as I believe they do, in the Library Assistants' Association. The elder assistants should be members of both bodies, of the Library Assistants' Association for the sake of the younger assistants, and of the Library Association for the sake of the movement. Then the Library Association ought to be so organised that it will have in every main centre of population in the kingdom a Branch Association. The duty of such Branch Associations should be not only the discussion of purely library matters, but during the next few critical years particularly, the carrying on, under direction from headquarters, of a public campaign of what I may term Library Enlightenment, by means of public meetings, lectures, and possibly literature, and by utilising every opportunity of coming into touch with councillors and others connected in one way or another with the administration of social and political affairs. The Branch Associations should make strenuous efforts to interest public men in the library and to induce them wherever possible to become members of the

Branch, if not members of the Library Association also. At the present moment, as I pointed out at Perth, the number of influential public men in the Library Association is decreasing, to the weakening of the work and of the influence of the Association in many directions. That we do not get these men as we ought to do is a reflection upon us. The men are there, they can be got. Look at what these men have done for Education. And so, if we can show them that the Library Movement is a live one, that there is something to be done with it, they will work for us, they will interest themselves in us, they will take us up, as they have taken Education up. Only we shall have to show them that we know what we want, that we all want, speaking broadly, the same thing; and that we are capable of some self-sacrifice in order to attain it. I don't want to be ethical, but I am profoundly convinced of the fact that just as in the end individuals get pretty well what they deserve to get, no more and no less, so movements, and bodies of men, get what they deserve. If we as librarians deserve better treatment in the future than we have received in the past, we shall get it. Everything depends on us; we need never doubt our cause.

As most of you are aware, I have recently addressed a meeting of the Northern Counties Branch of the Library Association on the question of the formation of a separate branch in the West Riding of Yorkshire. That branch if formed, as I hope it will be, will give us three efficient and satisfactory Branches in the North. It will then be for the librarians in the Midlands, and in the South to follow the lead of the North and organise Branches in these districts. I propose to supply your secretary with printed copies of my remarks at Harrogate, and to ask him to send a copy to each one of you. In that address you will find more with regard to the organisation of Branches than I have time to repeat now.

There is a further point upon which I am not in a position to enlarge now, but which I desire to submit for your consideration. I suggested in my address at Perth that in view of the work before us, and of the need for making the work which we are asking non-professional people to share, more interesting to them, that the Association should seek combination with other bodies having kindred aims, in order that we may conserve and unite our resources. The difficulties in securing the amalgamation of separate bodies, each with its own constitution, and its own

tradition, is very great, but I should not suggest amalgamation but rather federation. The Societies which were in my mind were in particular, The Museums Association, The Bibliographical Society, and your own, the Library Assistants' Association. It should not be difficult to draw up a scheme of federation under which each of these societies would preserve its constitution intact and its autonomy while it would pool its rooms, its office organisation, and perhaps its periodical. A certain number of meetings of the whole federation would be held each year, which would give an opportunity for the members of these kindred Associations to meet each other, and would tend inevitably in the future towards a real amalgamation, but that could be left to come about naturally, and as it were by the efflux of time itself. A federation on some such lines as these would be of enormous value in focussing effort. It may be that some formal proposals of this kind will come in due course before you, in the meantime you can turn the idea over in your minds and look at it from every point of view.

I said awhile back that I was not pessimistic as to the future of the Library Movement and of the Library Profession. So far from being pessimistic, I am definitely, decidedly, determinedly, optimistic. I believe, nay, I am certain, that if we put our shoulders together, if we drop, for the next few years anyhow, all our little domestic squabbles and suspicions one of another, if we make up our minds that we will each fill as well as we know how, our own niche in a great hierarchy of effort, that we shall within the next few years render the position of the public library and of the public librarian secure during the next half century.

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## PROCEEDINGS.

### JANUARY MEETING: BRUSSELS AND AFTER.

"To Brussels by proxy" might have been the title of the January meeting of the L.A.A. when the members foregathered at the Library Association Rooms, Bloomsbury Square, to hear papers by some of the participants in the visit to Brussels last Easter. Not only was the important work of the Brussels Institute described and illustrated by lantern slides, but the lighter aspect of the visit was likewise commemorated pictorially, and the stay-at-home member was able to see how his more venturesome confreres fared in the land of Rubens. The President occupied

the chair, and after the reading of the minutes announced that Mr. R. A. Peddie, F.L.A., the first Chairman of the Association, had been unanimously elected a member of the Council *vice* Mr. W. A. Peplow, resigned. General satisfaction was felt at the return of Mr. Peddie, who, fifteen years ago, did so much to set the Association on a firm footing.

In opening the Conference the President read a humorous paper from the "Brussels Album," the co-operative record of last year's visit, and then went on to describe the great educational benefits received by those who attended. Referring to the value of the new international movement thus inaugurated by the L.A.A., he said it was hoped to link up the methods of this country with those of other countries, and that during the coming year it was intended to visit Paris, where, he was sure, the Association would be as hospitably received as at Brussels. This was but the beginning of a series of International visits which it was hoped to continue year by year. A number of interesting views were then shewn on the screen and briefly described, after which Miss O. E. CLARKE (Islington) read a paper describing "The Foundation and Aims of the Brussels Institute." This paper was followed by one from the pen of Mr. WYNDHAM MORGAN (Cardiff), on the "Card Catalogue of the Institute," read in his absence by Mr. John Warner. "The Encyclopaedia, iconographic and general record work, with possible applications of the Institute's work in Great Britain," formed the text of an able contribution by Mr. H. W. Checketts (Birmingham), whilst the "Decimal Classification" was left to Mr. A. J. Hawkes to deal with. Owing to stress of work consequent upon his appointment to the Welsh National Library, however, he was unable to prepare it in time for the meeting.

A considerable number of diagrams illustrating the methods in use at the Institute were shewn and fully explained by the Lecturers, thus adding considerably to the instructive character of the meeting.

Mr. H. V. Hopwood (Patent Office) in opening the discussion said that M. M. Otlet and La Fontaine were idealists, but they did not want to impose their ideals on everyone. Everything that could be done to help Brussels should be done. Holland was already compiling a bibliography, and so was America, but in England nothing was being done, although it would be a simple matter for the British Museum to duplicate its slips and send them to Brussels. Such a step would be a great move towards international bibliography.



Mr. R. A. PEDDIE (St. Bride Foundation), continuing the discussion, said he was always interested when anyone had hopes of the British Museum. He condemned the card system as cumbrous in use, and pointed out the difficulty of making a reference among 10,000,000 cards. It was also impossible to tell whether a card was missing, as once removed no trace of it was left. He regretted the lack of interest in bibliography among English librarians, who had never supported the Bibliographical Society to any extent, with the result that it had become a dilettante Society. The Library Association had been offered a duplicate set of the Library of Congress cards, as well as a complete set of the Belgian ones, but up to the present it had not been able to find a Library willing to house them.

MESSRS. WARNER (Croydon), BROWN (Islington), and PHILIP (Gravesend) also took part in the debate, at the termination of which the Hon. Treasurer (Mr. W. Geo. Chambers) moved a vote of thanks to the readers of the papers, whom he complimented upon the terse manner in which they had presented the results of their visit to the meeting. Whilst appreciating the value of international bibliography he thought the subject was too large to be tackled until more work had been done on national lines. When national bibliographies had been compiled it would only be a matter for exchange and amalgamation to produce the desired international one. The motion was seconded by Miss Gilbert, who gave a few personal reminiscences of her Belgian visit, and carried with acclamation. A vote of thanks to Mr. Hopwood and those who assisted him in the manipulation of the lantern terminated the meeting.

#### NORTH-EASTERN BRANCH.

A Meeting of the North-Eastern Branch was held at the Sunderland Public Libraries, on Wednesday, January 17th. The members, who numbered 35, were welcomed by Mr. J. A. Charlton Deas, F.R.Hist.S., Librarian and Director. An enjoyable and instructive afternoon was spent at the Hendon Paper Works, by kind permission of the Secretary, Mr. W. R. Aitken. Under able guides the members were conducted through the various departments of the Paper Mills, where processes of manufacture, and the machinery used, were explained. An adjournment was then made to the Fawcett Street Café, where tea was provided by the Sunderland Libraries Staff Fellowship, to whom a hearty vote of thanks was accorded.

After the members had viewed the re-organised Central Library, the General Meeting was held in the Art Gallery. Mr. L. Stanley Jast, Hon. Secretary of the Library Association, delivered an address on "The Library Outlook," which appears on another page. An interesting discussion took place, and was contributed to by Messrs. Daniels, Herdman, Turnbull, Wilson, and the Hon. Secretary. Mr. Deas also joined in the discussion. Votes of thanks to Mr. Jast for his able address concluded the meeting.



## NOTABLE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE.

HAWKES, A. J. Suggestions towards a Constructional Revision of the Dewey Classification. *The Librarian Ser. No. 7.* 12 pp. Robert Atkinson. 6d. net.

The librarian of a very large library in which he had adopted the Dewey Decimal Classification once remarked that he wished he had never attempted to alter the scheme. Dewey himself gives a warning against making drastic alterations, and he is a bold man who would attempt to reconstruct the whole scheme. Mr. Hawkes confines himself in this clever and interesting pamphlet to sections 800 and 900. To deal with the latter first. The author has attempted to bring together the description, antiquities and history of countries and places, making each place the unit of classification. Further he allows for arrangement in rather over minute classes of maps, gazetteers, historical geography, geography guide books, road books, itineraries, impressions, etc., through antiquities to history under each place. This is done by giving a letter to each section, which is to follow the Dewey number for each country or place. E.G. 942 England; 942 a maps; 942 b gazetteers; 942 c historical geog.; etc. There is much to be said for bringing together books on places, making the form of history and description subsidiary to the place, Mr. Brown having adopted it for the "Subject" Classification, and many libraries having made some arrangement for so collecting "place" books. The present suggestion is a useful one, but we think there are few libraries in which so many divisions of geography and antiquities will be required, except perhaps in one or two cases, England for example.

As to the Literature rearrangement, we have left it for a second reading, because it seems so surprisingly as if Mr. Hawkes has tried to do exactly the opposite of what he set out to do in part two. His suggestion is to collect together the literature about literature in all languages, English first and followed by American, German, French, etc., in Dewey order, using the sections 801-809 subdivided by decimal figures to denote the departments of literature in each language, books about drama, poetry, etc. Then follows the literature itself. Mr. Hawkes aims at logic in his arrangement, but surely it is not logical to divorce books about English poetry from poetry, books about drama from drama, etc., to gain the very doubtful advantage of collecting all books about literature. To this extent we differ from Mr. Hawkes and so disagree entirely with his premiss that the existing form of classification of literature is a "puzzle to the borrowing public."

H.E.

MAIR, G. H. English Literature: Modern. *Home University Library.* Williams & Norgate. One shilling net.

To assistants reading for the Library Association examination in English Literature, this volume can be recommended as a most useful introduction to the subject. The scope of the book is wider than the title leads one to expect, since it traces modern literature from its rise in Elizabethan times; it thus provides a conspectus of modern literature in general, from which to approach the special period required by the examiners.

H.R.P.

SAYERS, W. C. BERWICK. *The Children's Library: a Practical Manual for Public, School, and Home Libraries.* vii. + 224 pp. Routledge. 2s. 6d.

The President of the Library Assistants' Association has produced a book which will be welcomed, not only by the members of the Council of the Association to whom it is dedicated, but also by librarians and school teachers and the still wider public, who, though not directly connected with libraries or education, yet take an interest in the provision of books for the

young. It will, indeed, have a much wider appeal than usually falls to books of this class, because of the style in which it is written. The subject is one which it is not easy to treat in an interesting manner, but the author has succeeded in producing a book which not only deals comprehensively with every phase of the children's library, but is also pleasant to read and interesting to a remarkable degree. Mr. Sayers is in a peculiarly good position to write of books for children, having made a special study of the subject in addition to possessing a wide practical experience of the working of a most successful system of school libraries at Croydon. He begins with a chapter on the essentials of children's books, pointing out what to look for in choosing from the existing literature, and containing valuable suggestions as to suitable subjects on which books might be written. Then follow chapters on school and home libraries, cataloging and classification, including a complete code of rules and a simple scheme of arrangement, methods of handling and taking care of books, the public library and the child, the children's department with its furniture and fittings, and municipal school libraries. The value of lectures in connection with library work, especially for children, has become firmly established, and the chapters here given on lectures to children, the story hour, readings and reading circles, supply a distinct want in showing how to organize such work and hints on actual lecturing. A still further development of work with children is shown in the description of how to form and store a collection of pictures.

Not the least valuable feature of the book is the suggestive section on book-selection, which includes a most useful list of standard books and gives hints on publishers, prices and methods of purchase. The final chapter is on the children's librarian, and there is a full bibliography. We have nothing but praise for this book, which solves the difficulty of starting school libraries and gives a complete working basis for their maintenance.

H.E.

**STRACHEY, G. L.** *Landmarks in French Literature. Home University Library.* Williams & Norgate. One shilling net.

This volume of Messrs. Williams & Norgate's series forms a fitting companion to the one on English literature, but deals with a wider period. In order to bring the subject of French literature within the scope of a volume of the required size, the author has taken the main "landmarks" such as the middle ages, the renaissance, the romantic movement, etc., as a basis, and described each movement concisely and its effect on the literature as a whole. This he has done readably; and the annotated reading list at the end is most useful for students wishing to study the subject more widely.

H.R.P.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

\***BROWN, MR. REGINALD W.**, Sub-librarian of the Northampton Public Library, has been appointed Chief Librarian.

**GREY, MR. DUNCAN**, of the Carlisle Public Library, has been appointed Senior Assistant, Coventry Public Library.

**JACKSON, MR. ELLIOTT**, for twenty years Inspector of the Kelso division of the Roxburghshire police, has retired from the force on a pension, and has been appointed Librarian of the Kelso Public Library.

\***LAMBERT, MR. J. WILSON**, Senior Assistant, Central Library, Sunderland, has been appointed Librarian of the Gainsborough Public Library.

†**ORMEROD, MR. JAMES**, Librarian of the Public Library, Gainsborough, has been appointed Librarian of the Public Library, Farnworth, Bolton.

**THOMAS, MR. CHARLES EDGAR**, of Bishopsgate Institute, has been appointed Assistant in the Library of Sion College, London.

\*Member, L.A.A.

†Fellow, L.A.A.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE FICTION QUESTION.

To the Editor of "The Library Assistant."

DEAR SIR,

In my paper on the "Fiction Question" in the current issue of the *Library Assistant*, I stated that fiction less than two years old had been excluded from the Manchester Free Libraries. This is a mis-statement which I much regret having made. The decision of the Committee was, that fiction less than two years old should be excluded *unless specially recommended*.

I shall be glad if you will kindly publish as early as possible this correction.

Public Library,  
Handsworth,  
Birmingham.  
January 10th, 1912.

Yours, etc.,  
H. GRINDLE.

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MR. E. WYNDHAM HULME ON CLASSIFICATION.

To the Editor of "The Library Assistant."

SIR,

Will you allow me to draw the attention of students of classification to the important series of papers by Mr. E. Wyndham Hulme entitled "Principles of Book Classification" which commenced in *The Library Association Record* for October? The work is hardly suitable for students without some equipment in the subject, but for those who have clear ideas on the theory of classification it is suggestive, stimulating and irritating—three excellent things.

It seems to me that Mr. Hulme regards classification as something deduced from actual materials; and that in trying to separate ideas from their expression in literary form he has contradicted Richardson without disproving him. In fact the whole position of the writer bristles with challenges, and I hope later when they are complete to be allowed to make a critical examination of his papers. My present purpose is to call the attention of students—who do not always see the *Record*—to one of the most important of recent contributions to an interesting subject

W. C. BERWICK SAYERS.

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THE MERTHYR TYDFIL APPOINTMENT.\*

January 4th, 1912.

DEAR SIR,

I am directed to forward you a copy of a resolution adopted by my Council at its last meeting as follows:—

"That the Council of the Library Assistants' Association is of opinion that the salary offered by the Merthyr Tydfil Corporation (25/- per week) is totally inadequate to secure the services of a trained librarian."

I am,  
Yours faithfully,  
(Signed) HENRY T. COUTTS.

T. ANEURYN REES, Esq.,  
Town Clerk, Merthyr Tydfil.

Town Hall,  
Merthyr Tydfil.  
January 10th, 1912.

DEAR SIR,

LIBRARIAN.

Your letter relating to the above has been considered by my Public Libraries Committee, who have instructed me to reply stating that the

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\* Reference to this correspondence will be found in "The Work of the Council" paragraph.

person receiving the wage of 25s. per week at the Arcade Library is simply a Caretaker of the Library, which is used solely as a Reading Room. He is not a trained librarian, and before his appointment, had not any experience of the work, and in the opinion of the Committee the wages paid him in respect of the duties performed, are adequate.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) T. ANEURYN REES,  
Town Clerk.

Mr. HENRY T. COUTTS,  
Hon. Sec., Library Assistants' Association.

DEAR SIR,

January 22nd, 1912.

*Re* ADVERTISEMENT FOR LIBRARIAN.

I am directed by my Council to thank you for the explanation kindly given in your letter of the 10th inst. My Council would, however, respectfully submit to your Public Libraries Committee that, when an appointment is publicly advertised, it would be advisable to state specifically the nature of the office, as a confusion of the terms "librarian" and "caretaker" is liable to lower the status of librarianship.

T. ANEURYN REES, Esq.,  
Town Hall, Merthyr Tydfil.

I am,

Yours faithfully,  
(Signed) HENRY T. COUTTS,

## WORK OF THE COUNCIL.

The Sixth Council Meeting of the session was held at 24, Bloomsbury Square, W.C., on Wednesday, January 17th, at 8 p.m. Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers (President) occupied the Chair. The Honorary Secretary reported the receipt of a letter from the Town Clerk of Merthyr Tydfil referring to the recent appointment of a librarian or caretaker (see p. 39). The Delimitation of Branch Areas Committee was reported to be complete, and would commence work at an early date. A balance in hand of £37 11s. 4d., and accounts for payment amounting to £10 17s. 10d. were reported. A sum of £1 was granted to the International Committee for expenses connected with the organization of the Holiday School at Paris.

It was resolved that 23 numbers (and index) of "The Library" be purchased at a cost of 12s. 6d., and the volumes bound. The International Committee reported that it was their intention to proceed with the printing of the programme and vouchers. Those entering their names would be required to pay a deposit of 5s. An old friend of the Association had kindly offered prizes to the value of three, two, and one guineas, for the best professionally interesting accounts of the holiday school. A committee, consisting of Messrs. Chambers, Cooper, Peters, Sureties, and Thorne, was appointed to consider ways and means whereby the membership of the Association might be increased.

## NEW MEMBERS.

ASSOCIATES: Sydney F. Dixon (Croydon); R. J. Farndell (Manor House, Lewisham); Walter J. Marsh (Sydenham, Lewisham); Charles Spencer (Hither Green, Lewisham); Miss Clarice Porter (St. Albans); Walter B. Rix (Norwich).